

Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul

**Transformação genética de embriões somáticos de soja [*Glycine max* (L.) Merr.]  
utilizando o bombardeamento e sistema *Agrobacterium* de maneira integrada**

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## RESUMO

O objetivo do presente trabalho foi otimizar o sistema de transformação genética de embriões somáticos de soja [*Glycine max* (L.) Merr.] utilizando a biolística e o sistema *Agrobacterium* de maneira integrada. Os antibióticos, adicionados ao meio de cultura para supressão da bactéria após a transferência do transgene, foram o alvo do estudo. Inicialmente, comparou-se o efeito de diferentes tratamentos com antibióticos sobre o tecido embriogênico de soja e sua eficiência na supressão da linhagem LBA4404 de *Agrobacterium tumefaciens* durante o processo de transformação. A carbenicilina (500 mg/l) apresentou efeitos diferentes sobre o tecido vegetal das duas cultivares testadas. Os tecidos embriogênicos da cv. IAS5 não apresentaram diferenças significativas em relação ao controle, enquanto que a proliferação dos embriões somáticos da cv. Bragg foi três vezes maior com a adição deste antibiótico ao meio de cultura. Contudo, a presença da carbenicilina nas duas concentrações testadas (500 e 1000 mg/l) não foi eficiente para supressão de *Agrobacterium*. Por outro lado, nos tratamentos com cefotaxima sozinha (350 e 500 mg/l), ou cefotaxima (250 mg/l) + vancomicina (250 mg/l) esta bactéria foi completamente suprimida da superfície dos embriões somáticos após 49 dias de tratamento. No entanto, enquanto a presença de cefotaxima, em qualquer concentração, foi prejudicial à sobrevivência do tecido embriogênico, a combinação de cefotaxima + vancomicina não afetou significativamente os embriões somáticos de soja até os 63 dias de tratamento. Portanto, os resultados indicam que o tratamento com cefotaxima + vancomicina por um período de 49 - 63 dias é o mais adequado para a transformação genética de soja, por suprimir *Agrobacterium* e apresentar mínimos efeitos sobre o tecido embriogênico. Por fim, conjuntos de embriões somáticos de soja foram transformados e tratados com a combinação recomendada de antibióticos para avaliação da eficiência do método na obtenção de transformantes estáveis. Foram obtidos 48 e 232 clones higromicina-resistentes para Bragg e IAS5, respectivamente. Para cv. Bragg, 26 plantas foram obtidas de um único clone, enquanto 580 plantas foram regeneradas de 105 clones da cv. IAS5. As plantas transgênicas eram férteis e morfologicamente normais. A presença do transgene no genoma destas plantas foi confirmada por análises moleculares. Portanto, a adequação dos antibióticos permitiu o desenvolvimento de um método de transformação altamente eficiente para soja. Os resultados do presente trabalho constituem o primeiro registro (1) do efeito de antibióticos sobre tecidos de soja ou de leguminosas e (2) de

obtenção de transformantes estáveis de soja utilizando a biolística e o sistema *Agrobacterium* de maneira integrada.

## ABSTRACT

Integrated bombardment and *Agrobacterium*-mediated transformation of soybean [*Glycine max* (L.) Merr.] somatic embryos was improved by changing the antibiotic treatment required for bacteria suppression after gene transfer. First, the influence of different antibiotics on soybean embryogenic tissues and their efficacy in suppressing LBA4404 *Agrobacterium tumefaciens* strain in genetic transformation was evaluated. The effect of carbenicillin at 500 mg/l was genotype-dependent. This antibiotic did not affect embryo survival for cv. IAS5, but embryo proliferation increased three times for cv. Bragg, when compared to the control. However, on tissue culture conditions, carbenicillin at 500 and 1000 mg/l was not active against *Agrobacterium*. On the other hand, treatments with cefotaxime at 350 and 500 mg/l, and cefotaxime (250 mg/l) + vancomycin (250 mg/l) efficiently suppressed *Agrobacterium* after 49 days. Nevertheless, while cefotaxime alone, in both concentrations, caused the death of embryogenic tissues, cefotaxime + vancomycin did not affect negatively soybean somatic embryos until 63 days of treatment. Thus, the ideal antibiotic regime for soybean somatic embryo transformation would be the association of cefotaxime + vancomycin for 49 - 63 days. By identifying an antibiotic combination that suppressed *A. tumefaciens* with the least phytotoxic effects, we were able to recommend it for the improvement of the soybean *Agrobacterium*-mediated transformation procedure. To test if modifications on the antibiotic treatment would really maintain the viability of stable transformed cells and allow their development into plants, a transformation experiment was carried out with embryogenic tissues of two cultivars. Forty-eight and 232 independent proliferating hygromycin-resistant clones were obtained for Bragg and IAS5, respectively. For cv. Bragg, 26 plants were recovered from a unique clone, while 580 plants were obtained from 105 clones of cv. IAS5. Transgenic plants were fertile and morphologically normal. Southern analysis confirmed integration of T-DNA into plant genomes. Modification of the antibiotic treatment proposed here resulted in a high efficient *Agrobacterium*-mediated transformation procedure for soybean. Results presented here are the first report on (1) effects of antibiotics on soybean tissues cultures and (2) transgene stable integration using the integrated bombardment and *Agrobacterium*-mediated transformation system for this crop.

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## **Capítulo I**

### **INTRODUÇÃO GERAL**

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## **INTRODUÇÃO**

A possibilidade de isolar a informação genética de um organismo e transferi-la para qualquer outro conforme o interesse faz das técnicas de DNA recombinante uma ferramenta importante que ajuda a superar as barreiras do melhoramento convencional de plantas (Humara & Ordás, 1999). Para garantir o sucesso dos programas de transformação genética, são necessários protocolos eficientes de cultura *in vitro* e de transformação (Birch, 1997), que permitam a regeneração de plantas totalmente transformadas. Como cada vegetal responde de maneira diferente aos estímulos da cultura *in vitro* e aos diferentes métodos de transformação, os protocolos devem ser otimizados para cada espécie.

A soja [*Glycine max* (L.) Merr.] tornou-se alvo da transformação genética por apresentar pouca variabilidade entre as cultivares, o que limita avanços pelos métodos convencionais de melhoramento. Entretanto, apesar da pequena variabilidade genética, as cultivares de soja diferem consideravelmente quanto ao seu comportamento durante a cultura *in vitro* (Bailey et al., 1993; Santos et al., 1997; Droste et al., 2001) e à sua resposta à transformação genética (Droste et al., 2000). A importância econômica da soja para o Brasil, segundo maior produtor em nível mundial, justifica esforços direcionados ao melhoramento genético de cultivares recomendadas para plantio em nosso País.

Um sistema de cultura *in vitro* amplamente utilizado é a embriogênese somática, que consiste na obtenção de células com características embrionárias e totipotentes, a partir de tecidos somáticos diferenciados. A vantagem na utilização deste sistema quando se visa a transformação genética de soja é a origem unicelular dos embriões somáticos

secundários, o que permite a regeneração de plantas completamente transformadas (Finer, 1988). Além disso, o desenvolvimento de protocolos que permitem a clonagem dos embriões secundários (Finer, 1988; Finer e Nagasawa, 1988), viabilizou a obtenção de um grande número de plantas a partir de uma única célula transgênica (Sato et al., 1993).

Trabalhos prévios permitiram o desenvolvimento de um protocolo eficiente para a regeneração *in vitro* de plantas de soja, via embriogênese somática (Santos et al., 1997; Droste et al., 2001), estabelecendo a base para a transformação genética de cultivares recomendadas para plantio comercial no Brasil.

## 1. TRANSFERÊNCIA DE GENES PARA PLANTAS

Os métodos de transformação mais comumente utilizados para a transferência de genes para plantas são a biolística (Sanford, 1988) e o sistema *Agrobacterium* (Horsch et al., 1985).

A biolística também é conhecida como biobalística ou bombardeamento de micropartículas. Para a transformação por este método, partículas de alta densidade, como ouro ou tungstênio, cobertas com DNA, são aceleradas em direção ao tecido alvo com uma força tal que as façam penetrar na célula vegetal. As vantagens deste método são o fácil manuseio, a transformação de muitas células por disparo e a transformação de qualquer tipo de tecido. Por isso, este método é utilizado principalmente para vegetais que apresentam resistência à transformação por *Agrobacterium*. No entanto, o processo de transferência de genes por biolística, pode causar a fragmentação do DNA e/ou a inserção de cópias múltiplas, o que confere uma desvantagem à utilização desta técnica (Hadi et al., 1996).

Por outro lado, a transformação genética mediada por *Agrobacterium tumefaciens* permite que um número menor de cópias do gene de interesse seja integrado ao genoma da planta e reduz a probabilidade de rearranjos e fragmentação do transgene (Tinland & Hohn, 1995; Kohli et al., 2003). Essas características devem-se, provavelmente, à presença de menores quantidades do DNA de interesse nas células vegetais e à ligação do T-DNA com as proteínas *vir* de *Agrobacterium* que protegem e direcionam este fragmento de ácido

nucléico até o núcleo (Kohli et al., 2003). Essas vantagens, aliadas ao baixo custo operacional e à simplicidade dos protocolos de transformação justificam a universalidade do uso deste sistema (Brasileiro & Lacorte, 2000).

*A. tumefaciens* é uma bactéria de solo, Gram-negativa, que infecta naturalmente diversas plantas, causando uma doença conhecida como galha-da-coroa. A capacidade de infecção desta bactéria se deve à presença do plasmídeo Ti (do inglês *tumor-inducing*). Células vegetais lesadas exsudam compostos fenólicos, açúcares e aminoácidos que atraem as células deste tipo bacteriano e ativam os genes da região de virulência (região *vir*) do plasmídeo Ti. Os genes *vir* codificam proteínas que promovem a transferência de um fragmento do próprio plasmídeo, a região do T-DNA (do inglês *transferred-DNA*), para o interior do núcleo da célula vegetal. Então, o fragmento de DNA é integrado ao genoma vegetal por um mecanismo ainda não totalmente conhecido e expresso de forma estável. O T-DNA de *A. tumefaciens* contém dois tipos de oncogenes. O primeiro, codifica citocininas e/ou auxinas, que, em excesso, estimulam divisões celulares desordenadas, e, o segundo, opinas, que são utilizadas pelas bactérias como fonte de energia, carbono e nitrogênio (Stafford, 2000; Bodanese-Zanettini & Pasquali, 2004).

O conhecimento das bases moleculares para o desenvolvimento da galha-da-coroa e das particularidades do mecanismo de transferência do T-DNA permitiu a construção de vetores derivados do plasmídeo Ti para introdução de genes exógenos em plantas. Para tanto, é necessária a remoção dos oncogenes (processo denominado “desarmamento”) e a inserção dos genes de interesse neste local (Bodenese-Zanettini & Pasquali, 2004).

### **1.a. Transformação genética de soja mediada por *Agrobacterium***

Inicialmente, a *Agrobacterium* não era considerada patogênica para a soja (DeCleene & DeLey, 1976). No entanto, trabalhos posteriores mostraram a suscetibilidade da espécie a esta bactéria (Pedersen et al., 1983; Droste et al., 1994; Mauro et al., 1995). A primeira planta de soja estavelmente transformada a partir do sistema *Agrobacterium* foi registrada em 1988, utilizando-se explantes cotiledonares (Hinchee et al., 1988). Um ano mais tarde, embriões somáticos primários também foram transformados por esse sistema e convertidos em plantas (Parrott et al., 1989). Após, diversos trabalhos utilizando

*Agrobacterium* como vetor de transferência do DNA foram publicados para soja (Trick & Finer, 1998; Yan et al., 2000; Olhoft et al., 2003; Ko et al., 2004; Paz et al., 2004). Contudo a transformação dessa leguminosa pelo sistema *Agrobacterium* ainda não pode ser utilizada como uma técnica rotineira para introdução de genes de interesse nesta espécie vegetal (Trick et al., 1997). Isso se deve principalmente a associação de baixas taxas de transformação e regeneração, bem como a freqüente obtenção de plantas químéricas (Chandra & Pental, 2003).

### **1.b. Transformação de soja através do uso integrado da biolística e do sistema *Agrobacterium***

Para garantir o sucesso da transformação mediada por *Agrobacterium* a parede das células vegetais deve ser lesada, uma vez que os ferimentos estimulam a infecção pelas bactérias, e, posteriormente, a transferência do gene de interesse (Bidney et al., 1992), como já descrito anteriormente. No entanto, a lesão não pode ser muito grande para não comprometer a sobrevivência do tecido vegetal. O uso integrado da biolística e do sistema *Agrobacterium* é um método alternativo que associa a infecção pela bactéria à capacidade de abertura de microferimentos pelo bombardeamento de micropartículas. Estes métodos de transformação foram utilizados, pela primeira vez, de maneira integrada, por Bidney et al. (1992) para transformação de folhas de tabaco e meristemas de girassol. Posteriormente, a técnica também foi desenvolvida para transformação de meristemas de banana (May et al., 1995) e de feijão (Brasileiro et al., 1996). Mais recentemente, Droste et al. (2000) utilizaram este sistema para a transformação de embriões somáticos de soja, obtendo expressão transiente significativa, mas não foi obtida confirmação de transformação estável, porque todo o tecido vegetal submetido à transformação morreu durante o processo de seleção. Na literatura não há registros de regeneração de plantas a partir de embriões somáticos de soja transformados por este sistema.

No protocolo de transformação utilizado por Droste et al. (2000), após o período de co-cultura, os conjuntos embriogênicos foram mantidos em meio de proliferação contendo 350 mg/l de cefotaxima durante três meses para a eliminação de *Agrobacterium*. Contudo, este composto parece afetar a sobrevivência dos embriões somáticos de soja e o tempo

prolongado de exposição, acentuar seu efeito negativo (Wiebke et al., 2002). Acredita-se que o tratamento com antibiótico possa ser a causa da mortalidade dos embriões submetidos à transformação.

## 2. ANTIBIÓTICOS

### 2.a. Função dos antibióticos durante o processo de transformação mediado por *Agrobacterium*

Em programas de transformação que associam biolística ao sistema *Agrobacterium*, os conjuntos embriogênicos são submetidos ao bombardeamento e, em seguida, imersos em uma suspensão bacteriana por aproximadamente 30 minutos, para a infecção do tecido vegetal. Após, os conjuntos são retirados da solução e mantidos por 48 horas em meio de proliferação com acetosiringona, um composto fenólico que ativa os genes *vir* do plasmídeo Ti das bactérias. Esta etapa é denominada de co-cultura, pois a proliferação de bactérias e de embriões vegetais é estimulada simultaneamente. Nesta fase, as bactérias transferem seus T-DNAs para as células vegetais, os quais podem migrar até o núcleo e integrar-se ao genoma da planta (Stafford, 2000). Por isso, esta é uma etapa de extrema importância para a transformação genética mediada por *Agrobacterium*.

No entanto, após o período de co-cultura, é necessária a eliminação das bactérias, porque sua presença pode interferir no crescimento e desenvolvimento das células transformadas ou, até mesmo, causar a morte do tecido vegetal (Tang et al., 2000). A eliminação de *Agrobacterium* é, usualmente, obtida pela adição de antibióticos ao meio de cultura.

### 2.b. Efeito dos antibióticos sobre *A. tumefaciens*

Diversos antibióticos para eliminação de *Agrobacterium* estão descritos na literatura. Dentre os mais tradicionalmente utilizados estão a cefotaxima, sozinha ou em associação com vancomicina, e a carbenicilina (Tavazza et al., 1988; Benvenuto et al., 1991; Sarma et al., 1995; Shackelford & Chlan, 1996; Hammerschlag et al., 1997; Peña et

al., 1997; Alsheikh et al., 2002). Além destes, alguns trabalhos sugerem a utilização de antibióticos alternativos, tais como timentina (Nauerby et al., 1997; Cheng et al., 1998; Tang et al., 2000) e moxalactama (Mayolo et al., 2003). No entanto os resultados parecem não ser promissores. A timentina não se mostrou eficiente na supressão de *Agrobacterium*, pois quando os tecidos vegetais estavam aparentemente livres da contaminação, foram transferidos para meio de cultura sem antibiótico e a bactéria reincidiu sobre os mesmos (Cheng et al., 1998). Apesar da moxalactama apresentar atividade superior em algumas situações, os experimentos não comprovaram a efetiva supressão da bactéria após a remoção deste antibiótico do meio de cultura (Mayolo et al., 2003).

Cefotaxima e carbenicilina são antibióticos  $\beta$ -lactâmicos, sendo a carbenicilina um derivado de penicilina e, portanto, pertencente ao grupo das penicilinas e a cefotaxima um dos antibióticos que representa o grupo das cefalosporinas. A vancomicina pertence a outro grupo de antibióticos conhecido pelo próprio nome do antibiótico (Pollock et al., 1983).

A ação dos antibióticos sobre as bactérias pode se dar de diversas maneiras, sendo que as mais comuns são por interferência na síntese da parede celular ou na síntese protética e por inibição de enzimas específicas (Pollock et al., 1983). Penicilinas e cefalosporinas se ligam a proteínas específicas no periplasma bacteriano, próprio de bactérias Gram-negativas, interrompendo a síntese de peptideoglicano e provocando a morte da bactéria por lise celular (Nauerby et al., 1997). A vancomicina também interfere na síntese da parede celular (Pollock et al., 1983).

No entanto, o uso de certos antibióticos é limitado pelo fato de estarem sujeitos à inativação por ação de  $\beta$ -lactamases produzidas por algumas bactérias, enquanto outros são altamente resistentes à ação desta enzima (Tang et al., 2000). As  $\beta$ -lactamases podem inibir a atividade de antibióticos, hidrolisando o amido cíclico ligado ao anel  $\beta$ -lactâmico nas penicilinas e cefalosporinas (Nauerby et al., 1997).

A cefotaxima é um dos antibióticos com atividade bactericida mais ampla e apresenta forte resistência às  $\beta$ -lactamases (Pollock et al., 1983). Por outro lado, a carbenicilina apresenta atividade contra uma ampla variedade de bactérias, é resistente a certas  $\beta$ -lactamases, mas pode ser degradada por outras, o que inativa sua ação bactericida e, conseqüentemente, limita sua utilização (Pollock et al., 1983; Tang et al., 2000). A

carbenicilina também é sensível à acidez (Pollock et al., 1983), fato que deve ser levado em consideração quando adicionada a meios de cultura que, normalmente, exigem pH específico. Este é um fato importante quando se visa a embriogênese somática de soja, já que ela é estimulada por meios de cultura com pH levemente ácido. Já a vancomicina apresenta atividade bactericida apenas contra um grupo reduzido de bactérias Gram-positivas, sendo todas as Gram-negativas resistentes a ela (Pollock et al., 1983). Embora *Agrobacterium* seja uma bactéria Gram-negativa, a ação bactericida da vancomicina quando associada à cefotaxima contra este tipo bacteriano tem sido registrada em vários trabalhos, como já comentado anteriormente.

O tipo e a concentração adequados de antibióticos para eliminação de *Agrobacterium* têm sido testados em espécies tais como *Malus x domestica* (Hammerschlag et al., 1997), *Nicotiana tabacum* (Nauerby et al., 1997; Cheng et al., 1998), *Ulmus pumila* (Cheng et al., 1998), *Juglans regia* (Tang et al., 2000), *Dianthus caryophyllus* (Estopà et al., 2001) e *Theobroma cacao* (Mayolo et al., 2003). No entanto, os resultados destes trabalhos são bastante divergentes, principalmente no que diz respeito à concentração dos antibióticos, já que esta varia, entre outros fatores, com a linhagem de *Agrobacterium*, com a densidade óptica da suspensão bacteriana utilizada para a transformação, com o tempo de inoculação do tecido vegetal nesta suspensão e com os tempos de co-cultura e de exposição deste tecido aos agentes bactericidas.

### **2.c. Interação entre antibiótico e tecido vegetal**

Como carbenicilina, cefotaxima e vancomicina atuam diretamente sobre a síntese da parede celular bacteriana, a ação destes antibióticos foi considerada, durante muito tempo, específica a este tipo celular. No entanto, na prática, tem se observado uma interação entre antibióticos e tecido vegetal de diversas espécies durante a cultura *in vitro*. Os trabalhos realizados com plantas, até o momento, revelam que a fitotoxicidade dos antibióticos é genótipo e tecido específica (Quadros 1 e 2). Por outro lado, a presença destes compostos em determinadas concentrações tem apresentado influência positiva sobre o desenvolvimento dos tecidos de algumas espécies durante a cultura *in vitro* (Quadros 1 e 2).

Levando em conta o número expressivo de publicações, devemos considerar que os antibióticos interferem no desenvolvimento de tecidos vegetais durante a cultura *in vitro* de alguma forma, ainda que indireta. Portanto, para que um antibiótico possa ser utilizado em programas de transformação de plantas, além de ser eficiente na supressão de *Agrobacterium* e manter sua ação bactericida no meio de cultura, ele não deve ser tóxico ao tecido vegetal (Pollock et al., 1983).

## **2.d. Antibióticos e a transformação de embriões somáticos de soja mediada por *Agrobacterium***

Devido à importante função dos antibióticos no processo de transformação por meio do sistema *Agrobacterium*, um número expressivo de artigos sobre este assunto tem sido publicado, como discutido anteriormente. Entretanto, não há informações a respeito do efeito de antibióticos sobre a embriogênese somática de leguminosas, em especial da soja.

Portanto, faz-se necessária uma avaliação do efeito dos antibióticos sobre o tecido embriogênico de soja, do potencial bactericida desses agentes no meio de cultura para plantas e do tempo necessário para supressão de *Agrobacterium*. A escolha de um antibiótico que apresente ação bactericida sobre a linhagem de *Agrobacterium* utilizada e que, ao mesmo tempo, não tenha efeitos nocivos ao tecido vegetal nas diferentes etapas da cultura *in vitro*, permitindo a obtenção de plantas transgênicas, apresenta-se como uma alternativa promissora para a otimização da transformação de embriões somáticos de soja utilizando a biolística e o sistema *Agrobacterium* de maneira integrada.

Com a escolha de antibióticos apropriados, alguns autores já conseguiram otimizar os protocolos de transformação via *Agrobacterium* para espécies como *Juglans regia* (Tang et al., 2000), *Dianthus caryophyllus* (Estopà et al., 2001), *Fragaria vesca* e *F. v. semperflorens* (Alsheikh et al., 2002).

### **3. OBJETIVOS**

#### **3. a. Objetivo geral**

O objetivo principal deste trabalho foi a otimização da transformação de embriões somáticos de soja utilizando a biolística e o sistema *Agrobacterium* de maneira integrada.

#### **3.b. Objetivos específicos**

- Testar o efeito de diferentes tipos e concentrações de antibióticos sobre o tecido embriogênico não transformado.
- Testar a eficiência de diferentes tipos e concentrações de antibióticos em relação à capacidade de suprimir *A. tumefaciens* do tecido vegetal submetido ao processo de transformação.
- Comparar os tipos e concentrações de antibióticos quanto à capacidade bacteriostática, ao efeito sobre o tecido vegetal e à regeneração de plantas a partir dos embriões somáticos estavelmente transformados.
- Obter plantas estavelmente transformadas.

Quadro 1. Efeito da carbenicilina em diferentes concentrações sobre tecidos de várias espécies vegetais<sup>1</sup>

Rota de regeneração	Concentração de carbenicilina (mg/l)	Espécie vegetal	Efeitos desejáveis	Efeitos indesejáveis	Referência Bibliográfica
Embriogênese somática	100 - 1000	<i>Jugans regia</i>		Reduciu produção de embriões somáticos.	Tang et al., 2000
	375 - 500	<i>Carica papaya</i>		Reduciu produção de embriões somáticos.	Yu et al., 2001
	500	<i>Picea omorika</i>		Reduciu produção de embriões somáticos.	Mihaljevic et al., 2001
	100-300	<i>Theobroma cacao</i>		Reduciu produção de embriões somáticos.	Mayolo et al., 2003
Organogênese	100	<i>Malus x domestica</i>	Aumentou formação de brotos.		Hammerschlag et al., 1997
	500		Sem efeito sobre a formação de brotos.		
	500	<i>Dianthus caryophyllus</i>	Aumentou a formação de brotos.	Reduciu o alongamento dos brotos.	Estopà et al, 2001
	600	<i>Coryphantha elephantidens</i>	Aumentou a formação de brotos.		Bhau & Wakhlu, 2001
	↑ 1000			Reduciu a formação de brotos.	
	10 - 500	<i>Fragaria vesca</i> <i>F.v. semperflorens</i>	Sem efeito sobre a formação de brotos.		Alsheikh et al., 2002

1 Para revisão de trabalhos realizados antes de 1997, ver Nauerby et al. (1997).

Quadro 2. Efeito da cefotaxima em diferentes concentrações sobre tecidos de várias espécies vegetais<sup>1</sup>

Rota de regeneração	Concentração de cefotaxima (mg/l)	Espécie vegetal	Efeitos desejáveis	Efeitos indesejáveis	Referência Bibliográfica
Embriogênese somática	100 - 1000	<i>Jugans regia</i>		Reduciu produção de embriões somáticos.	Tang et al., 2000
	125			Reduciu produção de embriões somáticos.	
	250	<i>Carica papaya</i>	Aumentou produção de embriões somáticos.		Yu et al., 2001
	375 - 500		Sem efeito sobre embriões somáticos.		
	500		Sem efeito sobre embriões somáticos.		
	150	<i>Theobroma cacao</i>	Aumentou produção de embriões somáticos.		Mayolo et al., 2003
	200-300			Reduciu produção de embriões somáticos.	
	100	<i>Malus x domestica</i>		Reduciu formação de brotos.	Hammerschlag et al., 1997
	500		Sem efeito sobre a formação de brotos.		
Organogênese	250	<i>Dianthus caryophyllus</i>	Aumentou a formação de brotos.	Reduciu o alongamento dos brotos.	Estopà et al, 2001
	500		Aumentou a formação de brotos.		
	↑ 500	<i>Coryphantha elephantidens</i>		Reduciu a formação de brotos.	Bhau & Wakhlu, 2001
	10 - 500	<i>Fragaria vesca semperflorens</i> F.v.		Reduciu a formação de brotos.	Alsheikh et al., 2002

<sup>1</sup> Para revisão de trabalhos realizados antes de 1997, ver Nauerby et al. (1997).

## **Capítulo II**

# **INFLUENCE OF ANTIBIOTICS ON *AGROBACTERIUM*-MEDIATED TRANSFORMATION OF SOYBEAN SOMATIC EMBRYOS**

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Trabalho a ser submetido à revista Plant Cell Tissue and Organ Culture

# Influence of antibiotics on *Agrobacterium*-mediated transformation of soybean somatic embryos

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**Key words:** *Agrobacterium tumefaciens*, carbenicillin, cefotaxime, genetic transformation, *Glycine max*, somatic embryogenesis, vancomycin.

## Abstract

The influence of different antibiotic treatments on soybean embryogenic tissues and their efficacy in suppressing LBA4404 *Agrobacterium tumefaciens* strain in genetic transformation was evaluated. The effect of carbenicillin at 500 mg l<sup>-1</sup> was genotype-dependent. This antibiotic did not affect embryo survival for cv. IAS5, but three-fold increase of embryo proliferation was obtained for cv. Bragg, when compared to the control. However, on tissue culture conditions, carbenicillin at 500 and 1000 mg l<sup>-1</sup> was not active against *Agrobacterium*. On the other hand, treatments with cefotaxime at 350 and 500 mg l<sup>-1</sup>, and cefotaxime (250 mg l<sup>-1</sup>) + vancomycin (250 mg l<sup>-1</sup>) efficiently suppressed *Agrobacterium* after 49 days. Nevertheless, while cefotaxime alone, in both concentrations, caused the death of embryogenic tissues, cefotaxime + vancomycin did not affect negatively soybean somatic embryos until 63 days of treatment. This is the first work reporting the effect of antibiotics on soybean tissues. By identifying an antibiotic

combination that suppressed *A. tumefaciens* with the least phytotoxic effects, we were able to recommend it for the improvement of the soybean *Agrobacterium*-mediated transformation procedure.

*Abbreviations:* 2,4-D - 2,4-dichlorophenoxyacetic acid.

## Introduction

*Agrobacterium*-mediated transformation is one of the well-established techniques for introducing foreign DNA into plant tissues (Horsch, 1985; Stafford, 2000). The procedure involves the infection of explants by co-cultivation with disarmed *Agrobacterium* carrying a gene of interest. However, after transfer of genetic information, bacteria suppression is necessary, since their presence can interfere with growth and development of transformed plant cells or, even, cause the death of the cultures (Cooke et al., 1992; Mayolo et al., 2003). For this purpose, plant tissues are usually transferred to medium containing antibiotics. Carbenicillin, cefotaxime and vancomycin are antibiotics widely used to suppress *Agrobacterium* after transformation. There are many reports concerning the most appropriate antibiotic treatment (type, concentration, period) to effectively suppress *Agrobacterium* from target plant tissues of many species (Hammerschlag et al., 1997; Nauerby et al., 1997; Cheng et al., 1998; Tang et al., 2000; Estopà et al., 2001; Mayolo et al., 2003). However, results are very diverse, depending on several factors including *Agrobacterium* strain, density of bacterial suspension, incubation and co-culture lenght, type and concentration of bactericidal agents, and duration of antibiotic treatment.

One of the main interests in our laboratory is to develop genetic transformation procedure for Brazilian commercial soybean cultivars, aiming to introduce genes of interest for their improvement. Droste et al. (2000) described a basic method for *Agrobacterium* transformation of proliferating soybean somatic embryos. In this procedure, tungsten particle bombardment was used prior to *Agrobacterium* inoculation to cause microwounds on somatic embryo clusters, thereby enhancing bacteria attachment

and gene transfer to plant cells due to chemical signals from the wounded tissues (Hooykaas et al., 1991). Although an expressive transient activity was detected, all embryogenic tissues submitted to the transformation procedure died during the antibiotic treatment. Thus far, no reports on stable transformation and recovery of fertile transgenic soybean plants using this method were published. The obstacle for the obtention of stable transformants may have been the sensitivity of soybean somatic embryos to the antibiotic treatment.

The level of antibiotic required for *Agrobacterium* suppression is usually high and may interfere with the plant cultures by either inhibiting or promoting explant growth and regeneration. Plant sensitivity to antibiotics is species-specific and depends on a large extent on plant growth conditions (Lin et al., 1995; Nauerby et al., 1997; Estopà et al., 2001; Mihaljevic et al. 2001; Bhau and Wakhlu, 2001; Yu et al., 2001; Silva et al., 2003; Mayolo et al., 2003).

The goal of this study was to evaluate how different antibiotic treatments affect soybean embryogenic tissues and to determine their efficacy in suppressing *A. tumefaciens* in *Agrobacterium*-mediated genetic transformation. This is the first work reporting the effect of antibiotics on soybean tissues.

## Materials and methods

### *Plant material and culture conditions*

Two soybean cultivars, Bragg and IAS5, were used in this study due to their high response to inoculation with wild strains of *A. tumefaciens* (Droste et al., 1994) and their capability to react to *in vitro* culture conditions (Droste et al., 2001). Bragg is a North American-adapted cultivar, commonly used in genetic improvement programs, while IAS5 is a Brazilian cultivar indicated for commercial cropping in Brazil (Costamillan and Bertagnolli, 2004).

Pods with immature seeds (3-4 mm), harvested from field-grown plants, were surface sterilized by 1 min immersion in 70% ethanol, followed by 15 min in 4% sodium hypochlorite containing Tween-20. After three rinses in autoclaved distilled water, the

immature seeds were excised and the cotyledons, removed. To induce the somatic embryo formation, each cotyledon was placed with the abaxial side facing the modified D40 medium (Bailey et al., 1993), which contains MS salts (Murashige and Skoog, 1962), B5 vitamins (Gamborg et al., 1968), 40 mg l<sup>-1</sup> 2,4-D, 3% sucrose, 0.3% Phytagel<sup>TM</sup>, pH 7.0 (prior to autoclaving). Twenty cotyledons were placed in each plate. After 40 days on D40 medium, the cotyledons were transferred to D20 medium (D40 medium containing 20 mg l<sup>-1</sup> 2,4-D, 3% sucrose, pH 6.4; Wright et al., 1991). Fourteen days later, proliferative embryogenic tissues were separated and proliferated in D20 medium, with subcultures every 14 days. During the experiment, the cultures were maintained at 26±1°C with 16/8 h light/dark at a light intensity of 22.5 µEm<sup>-2</sup>s<sup>-1</sup>.

#### *Agrobacterium* strain

*Agrobacterium tumefaciens* LBA4404 harboring the superbinary plasmid pTOK233 (Hiei et al., 1994) were used for the transformation experiment. Forty-eight hours prior to transformation procedure, isolated colonies were grown in LB liquid medium according to Droste et al. (2000) and resuspended to an OD<sub>600nm</sub> of 0.3.

#### *Antibiotics*

The antibiotics cefotaxime (Claforan<sup>®</sup>, Laboratório Hoechst Marion Roussel S/A, Brazil), carbenicillin (Sigma) and vancomycin (Vanclomin<sup>®</sup>, Teuto Brasileiro, Brazil) were dissolved in water, filter-sterilized and stored at -20°C. Later, they were added to the autoclaved and partial cooled medium.

#### *Experimental treatments*

##### *Effects of antibiotics on somatic embryogenic tissues*

After four months on proliferation D20 medium, untransformed embryogenic clusters (around 0.67 mg and 2 mm in diameter each) were transferred to D20 medium supplemented with antibiotics. Four treatments were tested: (1) 350 mg l<sup>-1</sup> cefotaxime, (2) 500 mg l<sup>-1</sup> cefotaxime, (3) 500 mg l<sup>-1</sup> carbenicillin and (4) 250 mg l<sup>-1</sup> cefotaxime + 250 mg l<sup>-1</sup> vancomycin. Medium without antibiotics was used as control. The tissues were maintained under these conditions during 98 days, with subcultures every 14 days. The number of embryogenic clusters analyzed per cultivar/treatment is presented in Table 1.

Every 14 days embryogenic clusters were classified according to their extension of necrosis: (1) cluster without necrosis, (2) less than half cluster with necrosis, (3) half cluster with necrosis, (4) more than half cluster with necrosis and (5) entire cluster with necrosis. The extension of necrosis per treatment and cultivar was compared by Monte Carlo non-parametric statistical analysis.

At the end of the experiment, the percentage of surviving embryogenic clusters per treatment was evaluated and statistically analyzed by classical chi-square test. The residuals (observed value minus expected value) for each cell of table were individually analyzed in case the  $\chi^2$  value was statistically significant at  $\alpha = 0.05$ . Proliferating green tissue of each cluster was selected and individually weighted. Differences on the weight of surviving tissues among cultivars were analyzed by Mann-Whitney test and among treatments by Kruskal Wallis non-parametric analysis of variance. Pairwise multiple comparisons of ranked data were performed to compare treatments. Results of all statistical analyses with SPSS<sup>®</sup> statistical software for windows were considered significant at  $P < 0.05$ .

#### *Effects of antibiotics on Agrobacterium*

Embryogenic tissues of cv. Bragg, proliferated during six months on D20 medium, were submitted to the integrated bombardment and *Agrobacterium* transformation system. Transformation procedure was carried out according to Droste et al. (2000) with modifications. Bombardments were performed using a Particle Inflow Gun – PIG (Finer et al., 1992). Twenty-five  $\mu\text{l}$  of tungsten particles suspended in sterile distilled water were mixed with 25  $\mu\text{l}$   $\text{CaCl}_2$  (2.5 M) and 15  $\mu\text{l}$  spermidin (0.1M). After 5 min on ice, 45  $\mu\text{l}$  of the supernatant were removed. Each dish was bombarded once, with 2  $\mu\text{l}$  of the pellet mixture. Following the bombardment, the clusters were inoculated and incubated for 20 min in the bacterial suspension. Then, the inoculated explants were blotted on sterile filter paper and co-cultured for 48 h on D20 medium supplemented with 100  $\mu\text{M}$  acetosyringone. After this period, the tissues were washed in sterile distilled water, blotted on sterile filter paper and transferred to D20 medium containing antibiotics. Five treatments were tested: (1) 350  $\text{mg l}^{-1}$  cefotaxime, (2) 500  $\text{mg l}^{-1}$  cefotaxime, (3) 500  $\text{mg l}^{-1}$  carbenicillin, (4) 1000  $\text{mg l}^{-1}$  carbenicillin and (5) 250  $\text{mg l}^{-1}$  cefotaxime + 250  $\text{mg l}^{-1}$

vancomycin. Thirty clusters (0.67 mg each) were cultured for each treatment, 10 clusters in each dish. Embryogenic clusters were transferred to fresh medium every 14 days.

Clusters were individually evaluated for the presence of bacteria at seven days intervals under a stereoscopic microscope and data were compared by Kruskal Wallis non-parametric analysis of variance. Pairwise multiple comparisons of ranked data were performed to compare treatments. Intending to observe the possible recurrence of bacteria after different periods on antibiotic containing medium, embryogenic clusters of one dish/treatment were transferred to D20 medium without antibiotics after 35, 49 and 63 days, respectively. Data were statistically compared by Fisher non-parametric analysis. Results of all statistical analyses with SPSS<sup>®</sup> statistical software for windows were considered significant at P<0.05.

## **Results and discussion**

### *Effects of antibiotics on somatic embryogenic tissues*

Untransformed embryogenic clusters were cultured on medium supplemented with antibiotics for 98 days. Different concentrations of antibiotics commonly used in transformation experiments were tested. Embryogenic clusters cultured on antibiotic-free medium were used as control.

To evaluate the effect of treatment length on plant tissues, the embryogenic clusters were individually analyzed for the extension of necrosis every 14 days. Necrosis was first observed after 35 days, gradually increasing in extension along the time (Table 1). Although necrosis was also observed on embryogenic clusters cultured on antibiotic-free medium (control), its extension never exceeded 25% of the cluster. No significant differences among treatments and cultivars were detected after 35 and 49 days of culture. However, after 63 days, while cv. IAS5 did not present significant differences among treatments, necrosis extension varied significantly among treatments within cv. Bragg. As shown in Table 2, the frequency of embryogenic clusters without necrosis (class -) was higher for the control. A significant higher number of clusters presenting necrosis on less than half of their extension (class +) were obtained on treatments with carbenicillin and

cefotaxime + vancomycin. Higher frequencies of clusters showing necrosis on half or more than half of their extension (class ++ and +++) were observed for cefotaxime at 350 and 500 mg l<sup>-1</sup>. These findings indicated that, after 63 days antibiotic treatment, cefotaxime alone in both tested concentrations is more toxic to soybean embryogenic tissues than other antibiotics.

After 77 days of treatment, a substantial increase on necrosis extension could be observed, especially for cv. IAS5 (Table 1). An exception was the treatment with carbenicillin, which only presented negative effects on clusters of cv. IAS5 in the last week. Therefore, except for carbenicillin, it would be desirable that antibiotic treatment did not exceed more than 63 days.

After 98 days on medium with antibiotics, the percentage of surviving embryogenic clusters per treatment was analyzed and the proliferative green tissues evaluated for their weight. Significant differences among cultivars were detected, indicating that IAS5 was more sensitive to antibiotics than Bragg. Data are presented on Table 3. For cv. IAS5, the lowest percentage and weight of surviving clusters were observed on cultures containing cefotaxime + vancomycin. On the other hand, this cultivar presented higher percentages of surviving embryogenic clusters and green tissue weight on media without antibiotic (control) or supplemented with 500 mg l<sup>-1</sup> carbenicillin. For cv. Bragg, the lowest percentages of surviving clusters were obtained using 500 mg l<sup>-1</sup> cefotaxime or cefotaxime + vancomycin, whereas clusters cultured on other treatments presented significant higher survival percentages. Green tissues obtained on carbenicillin containing medium presented significant higher weight when compared with other treatments, achieving three times the weight of green tissues submitted to the control regime. Although, the mean weight of green tissues obtained in the additional treatments (cefotaxime 350 mg l<sup>-1</sup>, cefotaxime 500 mg l<sup>-1</sup>, cefotaxime + vancomycin and control) did not differ significantly, a direct association between the percentages of surviving clusters and their weight could also be observed for cv. Bragg.

Despite the importance of antibiotics during *Agrobacterium*-mediated transformation, no reports about the effect of these drugs on grain legume tissues, especially soybean, are available. Direct comparisons are difficult, because antibiotic effects differ according to plant species, type of explant and culture system.

The addition of 500 mg l<sup>-1</sup> carbenicillin to culture medium did not affect tissues of cv. IAS5, whereas proliferation of embryos of cv. Bragg was significantly enhanced. This antibiotic was previously reported as efficiently inducing somatic embryo formation of *Dianthus* cultivars at 500 mg l<sup>-1</sup> (Nakano and Mii, 1993). The mechanism of the stimulatory effect of carbenicillin is based on the structural composition of this antibiotic. Holford and Newbury (1992) showed that phenylacetic acid, a naturally occurring auxin, were one of the breakdown products of carbenicillin. This is in agreement with previous observations that high levels of auxin are required for soybean somatic embryos induction and proliferation (Ranch et al., 1985).

On the other hand, a detrimental effect of carbenicillin has been found on embryogenesis of most studied species. Decreased on embryo production in presence of carbenicillin was observed for *Picea sitchensis* at 500 mg l<sup>-1</sup> (Sarma et al., 1995), *Juglans regia* at 100-1000 mg l<sup>-1</sup> (Tang et al., 2000), *Picea omorika* at 500 mg l<sup>-1</sup> (Mihaljevic et al., 2001), *Carica papaya* at 375 and 500 mg l<sup>-1</sup> (Yu et al., 2001) and *Theobroma cacao* at 100-300 mg l<sup>-1</sup> (Mayolo et al., 2003). Lin et al. (1995) argued that, besides the breakdown products, other factors are involved in producing the auxin effects of carbenicillin, which turn the influence of this antibiotic on plant tissue culture more complex.

Analyzing the effect of cefotaxime on soybean somatic embryos, it was clearly observed that this antibiotic, regardless of concentrations, caused death of a considerable tissue extension, thereby reducing embryo proliferation capacity. This result can explain the fail on obtention of stable transformed tissues by Droste et al. (2000), who submitted the embryo clusters to 350 mg l<sup>-1</sup> cefotaxime, for 90 days. Effects of this drug on embryogenesis of other species vary according to antibiotic concentration. In *Juglans regia*, concentrations lower than 500 mg l<sup>-1</sup> determined slight reduction of embryo production, whereas at 1000 mg l<sup>-1</sup> cefotaxime the effect was significantly inhibitory (Tang et al., 2000). Embryogenesis of *Carica papaya* was enhanced by 250 mg l<sup>-1</sup> and reduced by 125 mg l<sup>-1</sup> cefotaxime, whereas no effects were observed at 375 and 500 mg l<sup>-1</sup> (Yu et al., 2001). Cefotaxime enhanced embryo production of *Theobroma cacao* at 150 mg l<sup>-1</sup>, while negative effects were observed at other concentrations tested (Mayolo et al., 2003). Additionally, this antibiotic was reported as effectively promoting somatic embryogenesis of *Dianthus* cultivars at 100 – 500 mg l<sup>-1</sup> (Nakano and Mii, 1993) and *Triticum aestivum* at

60 – 100 mg l<sup>-1</sup> (Mathias and Boyd, 1986). But, species such as *Picea sitchensis* (Sarma et al., 1995) and *P. omorika* (Mihaljevic et al., 2001) were not affected by cefotaxime treatment.

The chemical structure of cefotaxime does not readily suggest a breakdown product with auxin-like properties (Holford and Newbury, 1992) and a different mode of action may have to be sought. It is possible that metabolites, with plant growth regulatory activity, generated from cefotaxime by plant esterases, may be responsible for the effects observed on tissues of some species (Sarma et al., 1995; Mathias and Boyd, 1986).

Culture medium containing cefotaxime + vancomycin did not affect soybean somatic embryos until 63 days treatment. Unfortunately, there are no reports concerning the effect of this antibiotic combination on somatic embryogenesis, but it was demonstrated that this antibiotic association stimulates organogenesis in *Pinus pinea* (Humara and Ordás, 1999) and *Prunus armeniaca* (Burgos and Alburquerque, 2003).

Antibiotic treatments with cefotaxime alone or in combination with vancomycin proved to be highly toxic for soybean embryogenic tissues cultured for longer times (63 or more days; Table 1 and 2). Similar results were reported for *Hordeum vulgare* (Mathias and Mukasa, 1987), *Picea sitchensis* (Sarma et al., 1995) and *Triticum aestivum* (Bhau and Wakhlu, 2001). Antibiotic breakdown products may degrade polyribosomes, inhibit protein synthesis and disrupt the membrane permeability with the time (Zhang et al., 1999).

#### *Effects of antibiotics on suppression of A. tumefaciens*

In order to determine the antibiotic regime capable at suppressing *Agrobacterium* during the soybean somatic embryo gene transfer procedure, proliferative tissues were submitted to the integrated bombardment and *Agrobacterium* transformation system. After co-culture, embryogenic clusters were transferred to antibiotics containing medium and weekly observed for the presence of bacteria. Five treatments with different antibiotics types and concentrations were tested.

Bacteria presence was detected on all clusters immediately after co-cultivation (data not shown). Fourteen days later, *Agrobacterium* overgrowth could be observed on all

control dishes (containing antibiotic-free medium). Addition of carbenicillin to the medium, regardless to concentrations, was not effective at suppressing *Agrobacterium* growth (Table 4; Figure 1). Embryogenic clusters cultured on 500 or 1000 mg l<sup>-1</sup> carbenicillin containing medium were totally covered with *Agrobacterium* 21 and 35 days after the co-culture, respectively, making impossible further observations. On the other hand, treatments with cefotaxime (500 mg l<sup>-1</sup>) and the combination of cefotaxime (250 mg l<sup>-1</sup>) + vancomycin (250 mg l<sup>-1</sup>) were effective at suppressing *Agrobacterium* after 16 and 9 days, respectively (Table 4; Figure 1).

*Agrobacterium* recurrence is frequently observed when embryogenic clusters, visually free of contaminants, are cultured in the absence of antibiotics. To determine the optimal length of antibiotic treatment, embryogenic clusters were transferred to medium without antibiotics after 35, 49 and 63 days of treatment. *Agrobacterium* recurrence was observed on clusters that had been submitted to 35 days of treatment, regardless of antibiotic type and concentration (Table 4). However, the number of explants lost due to *Agrobacterium* overgrowth was significantly lower when the combination of cefotaxime + vancomycin was used. On the other hand, after 49 and 63 days of treatment, none of the embryogenic clusters presented *Agrobacterium* recurrence at all antibiotics tested.

Cefotaxime and carbenicillin belong to two major classes of antibiotics, cephalosporins and penicillins, respectively. These drugs, known as β-lactams, prevent bacteria proliferation by inhibiting cell wall synthesis during its division (Pollock et al., 1983). Both classes of antibiotics become covalently linked to the cell's penicillin-binding proteins, enzymes responsible for constructing or modifying the bacterial cell wall. Antibiotic binding prevents cell wall synthesis and provokes the death of the bacteria by cell wall lysis (Nauerby et al., 1997). Some bacteria containing β-lactamases can prevent the activity of the antibiotics by hydrolising the cyclic amide bonds of the β-lactam ring in penicillins and cephalosporins. Cefotaxime and carbenicillin are very active antibiotics against a large number of bacteria species. However, while cefotaxime is highly resistant, carbenicillin is sensitive to β-lactamases produced by *Agrobacterium* (Tang et al., 2000). In addition, carbenicillin is acid-labile (Pollock et al., 1983).

Our results showed that cefotaxime is better than carbenicillin for eliminating *Agrobacterium* from soybean somatic embryo clusters, what can be accounted to the

antibiotics features above described. Cefotaxime was previously reported as the most effective antibiotic at suppressing LBA4404 *Agrobacterium* strain from explants of *Nicotiana tabacum* (Shackelford and Chlan, 1996) and *Fragaria vesca* (Alsheikh et al., 2002).

Vancomycin is a glycopeptide antibiotic, effective against most Gram-positive bacteria. When used in combination with a  $\beta$ -lactam antibiotic, vancomycin proves to be effective against Gram-negative bacteria such as *Agrobacterium*, since the  $\beta$ -lactam antibiotic disrupts the outer membrane of the bacteria allowing vancomycin to reach the bacterial cell wall and inhibit its synthesis (Burgos and Alburquerque, 2003). Although, there were no marked differences at *Agrobacterium* suppression between treatments containing cefotaxime alone or in association with vancomycin, the antibiotics combination was faster and more effective. Moreover, addition of vancomycin allowed the use of a lower concentration of cefotaxime, thereby minimizing the toxic effects of this antibiotic to plant cells on short term-cultures (Table 2).

Development of an effective *Agrobacterium*-transformation system for soybean depends on the availability of tissue culture techniques that permit efficient DNA delivery, selection of transformed cells and recovery of whole transgenic plants. Therefore, choice of optimal antibiotic treatment for *Agrobacterium* suppression is critical for transformation success. Our results indicated that, besides of efficiently eliminating bacteria, combination of cefotaxime ( $250 \text{ mg l}^{-1}$ ) + vancomycin ( $250 \text{ mg l}^{-1}$ ) had no negative effect on soybean somatic embryos until 63 days of treatment. These findings are valuable for improving transformation of soybean and, even, of other grain legume species.

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Table 1. Extension of necrosis on somatic embryogenic clusters of two soybean cultivars along different antibiotic treatments

Cultivar	Antibiotics	Concentrations (mg l <sup>-1</sup> )	Number of embryogenic clusters	Extension of necrosis <sup>1,2</sup>								
				0 days	7 days	21 days	35 days	49 days	63 days	77 days	91 days	98 days
IAS5	Cefotaxime	350	75	-	-	-	-	+	++	+++	+++	+++
	Cefotaxime	500	75	-	-	-	-	+	+	++	++	+++
	Carbenicillin	500	67	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+++
	Cefotaxime + vancomycin	250+250	75	-	-	-	+	+	++	++	+++	++++
	Control		69	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+
	Total		361									
Bragg	Cefotaxime	350	75	-	-	-	+	+	++	++	++	++
	Cefotaxime	500	71	-	-	-	+	+	++	++	++	+++
	Carbenicillin	500	56	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+
	Cefotaxime + vancomycin	250+250	75	-	-	-	+	+	+	++	+++	+++
	Control		63	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+
	Total		340									

<sup>1</sup> This results are the average area of necrosis, classified into 5 categories listed below.

<sup>2</sup> (-) cluster without necrosis; (+) less than half cluster with necrosis; (++) half cluster with necrosis; (+++) more than half cluster with necrosis; (++++) entire cluster with necrosis.

Table 2. Percentage of embryogenic clusters of soybean cv. Bragg in each necrosis extention class after 63 days of different antibiotic treatments

Antibiotics	Concentrations (mg l <sup>-1</sup> )	Number of embryogenic clusters	Necrosis extension <sup>1</sup>				
			-	+	++	+++	++++
Cefotaxime	350	75	1.3%	61.3%	6.7%*	30.7%*	0%
Cefotaxime	500	71	2.8%	63%	7.0%*	26.8%*	0%
Carbenicillin	500	56	3.6%	92.9%*	0%	3.6%	0%
Cefotaxime + vancomycin	250+250	75	1.3%	82.7%*	0%	16.0%	0%
Control		63	15.9%*	73.0%	1.6%	9.5%	0%
Total		340					

<sup>1</sup> (-) cluster without necrosis; (+) less than half cluster with necrosis; (++) half cluster with necrosis; (+++) more than half cluster with necrosis; (++++) entire cluster with necrosis.

\* Monte Carlo non-parametric analysis: significantly different at 0.05 (same column).

Table 3. Survival and weight of proliferative embryogenic clusters of two soybean cultivars after 98 days of different antibiotic treatments

Antibiotics	Concentrations (mg l <sup>-1</sup> )	IAS5			Bragg		
		Number of embryogenic clusters	Survival clusters (%) <sup>1</sup>	Weight (mg) of cluster (mean±SD) <sup>2</sup>	Number of embryogenic clusters	Survival clusters (%)	Weight (mg) of cluster (mean±SD)
Cefotaxime	350	75	68.0	0.94±1.06 <sup>b</sup>	75	98.6 <sup>↑</sup>	4.29±3.41 <sup>b</sup>
Cefotaxime	500	75	73.3	1.33±1.38 <sup>b</sup>	71	85.9 <sup>↓</sup>	3.59±4.08 <sup>b</sup>
Carbenicillin	500	67	74.6 <sup>↑</sup>	4.84±3.97 <sup>a</sup>	56	100 <sup>↑</sup>	13.84±9.11 <sup>a</sup>
Cefotaxime + vancomycin	250+250	75	30.6 <sup>↓</sup>	0.27±0.22 <sup>c</sup>	75	82.7 <sup>↓</sup>	2.89±3 <sup>b</sup>
Control		69	78.3 <sup>↑</sup>	5.62±5.78 <sup>a</sup>	63	98.4 <sup>↑</sup>	4.64±4.34 <sup>b</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Chi-square residual test: significant differences at 0.05. "↑" indicates higher and "↓" lower percentages of survival in relation to the expected values.

<sup>2</sup> Multiple comparisons test: different letters in the same column indicate significant differences at 0.05.

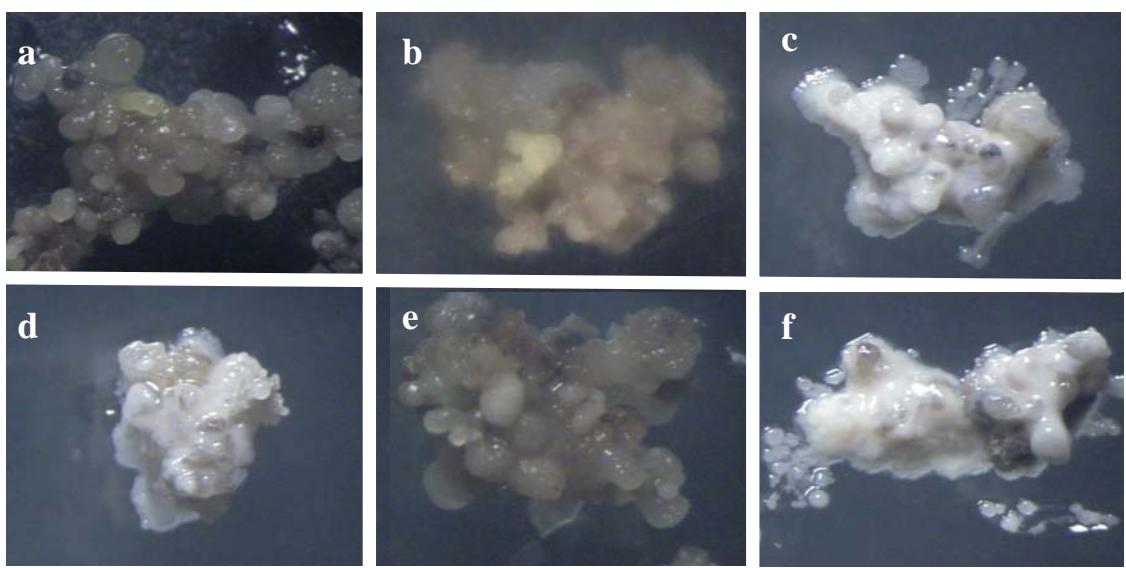
Table 4. Effect of different antibiotic treatments at suppression of LBA4404 *Agrobacterium tumefaciens* strain on soybean somatic embryogenic clusters

Antibiotics	Concentrations (mg l <sup>-1</sup> )	Days to suppress <i>Agrobacterium</i> (mean±SD) <sup>1</sup>	Embryogenic clusters with <i>Agrobacterium</i> recurrence after treatment (%)		
			Treatment period		
			35 days	49 days	63 days
Cefotaxime	350	20±13 <sup>b</sup>	88.9	0	0
Cefotaxime	500	16±13 <sup>a,b</sup>	88.9	0	0
Cefotaxime + vancomycin	250 + 250	9±8 <sup>a</sup>	33.4*	0	0
Carbenicillin	500	overgrowth	-	-	-
Carbenicillin	1000	overgrowth	-	-	-

<sup>1</sup> Multiple comparisons test: different letters indicate significant differences at 0.05.

\* Fisher non-parametric analysis: significantly different at 0.05.

Figure 1. Suppression of LBA4404 *Agrobacterium tumefaciens* strain on soybean somatic embryogenic clusters after 30 days of different antibiotic treatments. (a) cefotaxime 350 mg l<sup>-1</sup>, (b) cefotaxime 500 mg l<sup>-1</sup>, (c) carbenicillin 500 mg l<sup>-1</sup>, (d) carbenicillin 1000 mg l<sup>-1</sup>, (e) cefotaxime 250 mg/l + vancomycin 250 mg l<sup>-1</sup> e (f) control.



## **Capítulo III**

# **EFFICIENT SOYBEAN TRANSFORMATION USING THE INTEGRATED BOMBARDMENT AND *AGROBACTERIUM* SYSTEM**

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Trabalho a ser submetido à revista Plant Cell Tissue and Organ Culture

# **Efficient soybean transformation using the integrated bombardment and *Agrobacterium* system**

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**Key words:** *Agrobacterium tumefaciens*, genetic transformation, *Glycine max*, somatic embryogenesis.

## **Abstract**

This work describes a high efficient *Agrobacterium*-mediated transformation procedure for soybean [*Glycine max* L. Merrill]. The LBA4404::pTOK233 *Agrobacterium tumefaciens* strain was used to transfer the *gus*-intron, *hpt* and *nptII* genes into the plant genome. Prior to *Agrobacterium* inoculation, proliferative embryogenic clusters were wounded by tungsten particle bombardment. Forty-eight and 232 independent proliferative hygromycin-resistant embryogenic clones were obtained for cv. Bragg and cv. IAS5, respectively. For cv. Bragg, 26 plants were obtained from a unique clone, while 580 plants were recovered from 105 clones of cv. IAS5. Southern analysis confirmed integration of T-DNA into plant genomes. This is the first report of transgenic fertile plants obtained from somatic embryogenic tissues transformed by the integrated bombardment and *Agrobacterium* system.

*Abbreviations:* 2,4-D - 2,4-dichlorophenoxyacetic acid.

## Introduction

Soybean [*Glycine max* L. Merrill] traditional breeding is greatly restrict due to its limited germoplasm availability (Hiromoto and Vello, 1986; Abdelnoor et al., 1995; Priolli et al., 2002). Therefore, genetic transformation represents a powerful tool in breeding programs by producing novel and genetically diverse plant material. Since the response to *in vitro* stimulus and transformation procedure have been demonstrated to be genotype specific (Trick et al., 1997; Simmonds and Donaldson, 2000; Meurer et al., 2001), Brazil - the world's second largest soybean producer – has an special interest in developing efficient and reliable methods to transform soybean and in applying this technology for the improvement of this crop. Unfortunately, advances in soybean transformation appear to be slow compared to other important species, into which many agronomical useful genes had already been introduced.

Although many different techniques have been tested for gene delivery into plant cells, two major methods, *Agrobacterium*-mediated (Horsch et al., 1985) and particle bombardment (Sanford, 1988), are extensively employed for genetic transformation of crop plants. Transgenic fertile soybeans were already obtained from different explants using both systems (Trick et al., 1997; Chandra and Pental, 2003). The advantages of *Agrobacterium*-mediated gene transfer over the particle bombardment include the transfer of relatively large segments of DNA, the integration of lower transgene copy numbers into the plant genome, the occurrence of lower level of transgene rearrangement and the lower frequency of genomic DNA interspersion (Kohli et al., 2003).

Recovery of the first transgenic soybean plants using *Agrobacterium*-mediated transformation of cotyledony nodes was reported in 1988 (Hinchee et al.). Transgenic plants were also obtained utilizing primary somatic embryos as target for *Agrabcterium*-mediated transformation (Parrott et al., 1989). However, in both studies, transformation frequencies were low and obtained plants were chimeric. Although recently advances in transformation techniques using different explants had been achieved (Trick and Finer,

1998; Yan et al., 2000; Olhoft et al., 2003; Ko et al., 2004; Paz et al., 2004), problems with number of transgenic recovered plants and chimerism were not overcome.

The unicellular origin of soybean secondary somatic embryos made them a useful target for genetic transformation, producing totally transgenic plants (Sato et al., 1993). For this reason, proliferating somatic embryos have been used by numerous laboratories for particle bombardment transformation of soybean (Finer and McMullen, 1991; Sato et al., 1993; Parrot et al., 1994; Hadi et al., 1996; Liu et al., 1996; Stewart et al., 1996; Simmonds and Donaldson, 2000; Droste et al., 2002).

*Agrobacterium*-mediated transformation of proliferating somatic embryos was reported by Droste et al. (2000). Particle bombardment prior to *Agrobacterium* inoculation was used to wound the target tissues. Chemical signals from wounded plant cells would enhance *Agrobacterium* attachment and subsequently gene transfer (Hooykaas et al., 1991). Although transient expression of the *gus*-intron gene was successfully demonstrated by Droste et al. (2000), stable transformants were not obtained. Very recently, it was demonstrated that soybean somatic embryos were sensitive to the antibiotics required for *Agrobacterium* suppression after gene transfer (B. Wiebke, in preparation). A modification on transformation protocol (antibiotic treatment) was suggested to maintain the viability of stable transformed cells and allow their development into plants. The goal of the present work was to test the efficiency of the modified integrated bombardment and *Agrobacterium* transformation system for soybean. The results showed here represent the first report of successful recovery of a high number of soybean transgenic fertile plants obtained from *Agrobacterium*-mediated transformation of proliferating somatic embryos.

## Materials and Methods

### *Plant material and culture conditions*

Two soybean genotypes, Bragg and IAS5, were chosen for *Agrobacterium*-mediated transformation experiment due to their high response to inoculation with wild strains of *A. tumefaciens* (Droste et al., 1994) and their capability to respond to *in vitro* culture conditions (Droste et al., 2001). Bragg is a North American-adapted cultivar,

commonly used in genetic improvement programs, while IAS5 is a Brazilian cultivar indicated for commercial cropping in Brazil (Costamillan and Bertagnolli, 2004).

Immature pods were harvested from field-grown plants and surface sterilized by 1 min immersion in 70% ethanol, followed by 15 min in 4% sodium hypochlorite containing Tween-20. Following three rinses in autoclaved distilled water, the embryonic axes of immature seeds (3-4 mm in length) were removed and the cotyledons used as explants for culture. Somatic embryogenesis was induced placing each cotyledon with the abaxial side facing the modified D40 medium (Bailey et al., 1993), which contains MS salts (Murashige and Skoog, 1962), B5 vitamins (Gamborg et al., 1968), 40 mg l<sup>-1</sup> 2,4-D, 3% sucrose, 0.3% Phytagel<sup>TM</sup>, pH 7.0 (prior to autoclaving). Twenty cotyledons were placed in each petri dish. After 40 days on D40 medium, the cotyledons were transferred to D20 medium (D40 medium containing 20 mg l<sup>-1</sup> 2,4-D, 3% sucrose, pH 6.4; Wright et al., 1991). Fourteen days later, clusters containing secondary embryos were removed from cotyledons and transferred to fresh D20 medium. The embryogenic tissues were proliferated on this medium with subcultures every 14 days. The cultures were maintained at 26±1°C with 16/8 h light/dark at a light intensity of 22,5 µEm<sup>-2</sup>s<sup>-1</sup>.

#### ***Agrobacterium* strain**

The *Agrobacterium tumefaciens* strain LBA4404 harboring the “superbinary” plasmid pTOK233 (Hiei et al, 1994) was used to transfer the transgenes into the plant genome. The T-DNA region of this vector contains three genes: the β-glucuronidase gene (*gus*-intron), the hygromycin-resistance gene (*hpt*) and the kanamycin-resistance gene (*nptII*).

Fourty eight hours prior to transformation procedure, *Agrobacterium* were prepared according to Droste et al. (2000). Isolated bacteria colonies were grown 48 h in LB medium containing 50 mg l<sup>-1</sup> rifampicin, 50 mg l<sup>-1</sup> kanamycin and 100 µM acetosyringone under continuous shaking at 28°C. Cells were centrifuged and resuspended in D10 liquid medium (D20 medium with 10 mg l<sup>-1</sup> 2,4-D) containing 100 µM acetosyringone to an OD<sub>600nm</sub> of 0.3.

### *Transformation procedure and selection of transgenic clones*

The experiment was carried out using 11 months proliferating embryogenic tissues. Fourty-eight hours before transformation, 12 embryogenic clusters/dish, around 0.67 mg/cluster, were transferred to fresh D20 medium. Ten dishes were prepared per cultivar. Fifteen minutes before the bombardment, the clusters were placed in the center of the dishes, which were maintained uncovered in a laminar flow hood for 15 min to reduce the turgor pressure of the plant material (Vain et al., 1993).

Transformation procedure followed the protocol described by Droste et al. (2000) with modifications. Bombardments were performed using a Particle Inflow Gun – PIG (Finer et al., 1992). Twenty-five  $\mu$ l of tungsten particles suspended in sterile distilled water were mixed with 25  $\mu$ l CaCl<sub>2</sub> (2.5 M) and 15  $\mu$ l spermidin (0.1M). After 5 min on ice, 45  $\mu$ l of the supernatant were removed. Each dish was bombarded once, with 2  $\mu$ l of the pellet mixture. Following the bombardment, the clusters were inoculated and incubated for 20 min in the bacterial suspension. Then, the inoculated explants were blotted on sterile filter paper and co-cultured for 48 h on D20 medium supplemented with 100  $\mu$ M acetosyringone. After this period, the tissues were washed in sterile distilled water, blotted on sterile filter paper and transferred to D20 medium containing 250 mg l<sup>-1</sup> cefotaxime (Claforan®, Laboratório Hoechst Marion Roussel S/A, Brazil) + 250 mg l<sup>-1</sup> vancomycin (Vanclomin®, Teuto Brasileiro, Brazil). The explants were maintained on this medium for 10 days and then transferred to fresh D20 medium supplemented with the same antibiotics plus 12.5 mg l<sup>-1</sup> of hygromycin-B (Sigma) for more 21 days. Thereafter, the plant material was kept on D20 medium containing the same three antibiotics, but with a concentration of 25 mg l<sup>-1</sup> hygromycin-B. After 18 days, the embryogenic tissues were, finally, transferred to fresh medium containing only hygromycin-B for additional 41 days, with subcultures every 14 days. In resume, the potentially transformed tissues was submitted simultaneously to two antibiotic treatments: (1) cefotaxime + vancomycin for a total of 49 days and (2) hygromycin-B for 80 days.

After the selection procedure, the pieces of green tissue were subcultivated individually in dishes containing fresh D20 medium without antibiotics during two additional months, with subculture every 14 days.

### *GUS histochemical assay*

Transient expression of *gus* was assayed as described by Jefferson (1987). Forty-eight hours after the end of the co-culture period, two embryogenic clusters were randomly picked from each dish and incubated overnight in 5-bromo-4-chloro-3-indolylglucuronide (X-Gluc) solution at 36°C, in the dark. After staining, the explants had their chlorophyll distained with 70% ethanol and the number of blue foci was counted.

### *Embryo histodifferentiation and conversion into plants*

To stimulate histodifferentiation, clusters of hygromycin-resistant embryogenic tissues were placed on modified MSM6 maturation medium (Finer and McMullen, 1991), containing MS salts, B5 vitamins, 6% sucrose, 0.3% Phytagel™, at pH 6.4 (prior to autoclaving). After 30 days, somatic embryos were individualized and transferred to fresh maturation medium for additional 30 days. The histodifferentiated embryos were placed on empty sterile dishes without medium for 2 days in order to promote partial desiccation. Subsequently, the partial dehydrated somatic embryos were placed on MS0 conversion medium, containing MS salts, B5 vitamins, 3% sucrose, 0.3% Phytagel™, at pH 6.4 (prior to autoclaving). After development of at least the primary root and the first leaf, plantlets were transferred to flasks containing the same medium. Conversion was recorded as the development of roots and at least one trifoliolate leaf. Plants were transferred to plastic pots containing vermiculite, covered with plastic film to maintain humidity, and gradually adapted to ambient conditions. Finally, the plants were transferred to pots containing organic soil and the complete development observed in a greenhouse.

### *Molecular analysis*

Total genomic DNA was isolated from either embryogenic or leaf tissues of hygromycin-resistant mature embryos and plants according to the CTAB procedure described by Doyle and Doyle (1987) with modifications.

The PCR reaction mixture consisted of 100 ng of template DNA, 0.2 mM of each dGTP, dATP, dCTP and dTTP, 1.5 mM MgCl<sub>2</sub>, 1X Taq buffer, 2.5 units of Taq DNA polymerase (Invitrogen), 0.5 µM of each primer for the *hpt* gene (5'- GCG ATT GCT GAT CCC CAT GTG TAT -3', forward and 5'- GGT TTC CAC TAT CGG CGA GTA CTT -3', reverse)

and autoclaved distilled water to 50 µl. Reactions were hot-started (5 minutes at 94°C) and subjected to 30 cycles as follows: 45 s at 94°C; 45 s at 52°C and 45 s at 72°C. After eletroforesis in a 1.5% agarose gel, the PCR-generated fragments were transferred overnight onto hybond N+ membrane (Amersham Biosciences) using standard solutions and protocols (Sambrook and Russel, 2001). Labeling and detection were conduced following the protocol of ECL Direct Nucleic Acid Labelling and Detection Systems (Amersham Biosciences). DNA fragments containing the *hpt* gene were amplified from the plasmid (pGusHyg) with the same primer set, and used as a hybridization probe on the Southern *blot* membrane. Probe was purified according GFX™ PCR DNA and Gel Band Purification Kit (Amersham Pharmacia Biotech Inc).

Genomic DNA (approximately 5 µg) was digested with *Hind*III and fractionated on a 0.8% agarose gel by electrophoresis. Southern *blot* and hybrydization were performed as described above.

## Results and Discussion

### *Transient gus expression*

To check if the DNA was successfully transferred into the plant cells, GUS activity was tested 48 h after the co-culture period in two randomly chosen embryogenic clusters per dish. For cv. Bragg, the mean number of blue foci per cluster was 7.3±5.7 and, for cv. IAS5, 6.5±2.1 (Table 1). As previously observed by Droste et al. (2000), areas of blue staining could be detected in samples of almost all dishes (19 out of 20 dishes) submitted to the integrated transformation system, confirming the susceptibility of both cultivars to *A. tumefaciens*. The presence of the *gus*-intron gene in the T-DNA guaranteed a trustful transient result since this gene could be expressed only in eukaryotic cells (Hiei et al., 1994). A lower number of blue foci was obtained when compared to the previous work (Droste et al., 2000). This result may be a consequence of the long-term (11 months) of proliferative embryogenic culture as already observed by Droste et al. (2000), who tested cultures of different ages (3 and 8-months old).

### *Selection of hygromycin-resistant clones*

After the antibiotic treatment, hygromycin-resistant, green embryogenic tissues could be visually selected and separately cultured for the proliferation of individual transformation clones in hygromycin-free D20 medium. The number of proliferative clones was almost 5-fold higher for cv. IAS5 when compared with cv. Bragg. For cv. Bragg, 48 independent proliferative hygromycin-resistant clones were obtained and, for cv. IAS5, 232 (Table 1).

### *Embryo histodifferentiation and conversion into plants*

After 30 days on maturation medium, histodifferentiated embryos could be visually individualized and counted. A total of 1225 and 4944 histodifferentiated embryos were obtained for Bragg and IAS5, respectively (Table 1). The histodifferentiated embryos were cultured for further 30 days on the same medium. After that, they were submitted to partial desiccation and transferred to conversion medium. Data of conversion are shown in Table 1. For cv. Bragg, 26 plants were obtained, representing 2% of conversion, calculated as the ratio: embryos converted into plants over total number of histodifferentiated embryos. Interestingly, the 26 plants were regenerated from a unique clone. For cv. IAS5, 580 plants were recovered from 105 clones, corresponding to a conversion frequency of 12%. Ten plants of cv. Bragg and 100 of cv. IAS5 were gradually exposed to ambient conditions and placed in a greenhouse. Plants transferred to soil flowered and set seeds (Figure 2).

It has been reported that soybean genotype contributed to variation in regenerability in tissue culture (Droste et al., 2001; Meurer et al., 2001) and cv. IAS5 is already known to have a higher regeneration capacity than cv. Bragg (Santos et al., 1997; Droste et al., 2002; Körbes and Droste, 2005).

### *Molecular analysis*

The presence of the *hpt* gene in the soybean genome was confirmed by Southern hybridization of the PCR product. A sample of 4 plants and 13 histodifferentiated embryos of cv. Bragg and 20 plants of cv. IAS5 was analyzed. The four plants of Bragg resulted from a unique transformation event, while the embryos of Bragg and plants of IAS5 represented independent events. As shown in Figure 2a and 2b, no hybridization band was

detected for the untransformed plant, while samples and positive controls presented an expected *hpt* fragment of approximately 512 pb. These results showed that all tested embryos/plants were stably transformed, confirming that our selection system is very tight.

The genomic Southern hybridization was performed to evaluate the copy number of integrated gene. Two plants of IAS5 derived from independent events and two plants of Bragg obtained from a unique event were analyzed. As shown in Figure 2c, genomic plant DNAs digested with *Hind*III and probed with *hpt* produced at least three different hybridization bands. All fragments were greater than the 4.4 kb expected. Since *Hind*III cuts the *hpt* gene only once, on its right limit, and the other cut occurred into the soybean genome, the number of hybridizing bands might reflect the number of gene copies integrated in different loci (Hiei et al., 1994).

Generally *Agrobacterium*-mediated transformation gives rise to lower transgene copy number compared to direct transformation methods (Kohli et al., 2003). All plants analyzed in this study presented at least three copies of the *hpt* gene. According to Hiei et al. (1994) and Cheng et al. (1997) it is not uncommon to find multiple transgene copies in the plant genome.

It is somewhat surprising that all analyzed plants presented a similar band pattern (Figure 2c). This result suggests the existence of preferential integration sites for the T-DNA of this *Agrobacterium* strain into the soybean genome. Kohli et al. (2003) reviewing the distribution and organization of transgene loci in plant genomes reported that in some studies T-DNA integration was shown to be a random process, but in other ones preferential insertion into transcription units or genes has been identified. It has been suggested that there may be preferential integration at sites with homology to the T-DNA border sequence (Matsumoto et al., 1990).

Considering the variety of advantages of the *Agrobacterium*-mediated gene transfer, this is normally the method of choice when more than one transformation system is available to a plant species (Hiei et al., 1994). In the last years, efforts have been done to achieve an efficient *Agrobacterium*-mediated transformation procedure for soybean somatic embryos (Trick and Finer, 1997; Droste et al., 2000; B. Wiebke, in preparation). This is the first report of transgenic plants obtained from somatic embryogenic tissues

transformed by the integrated bombardment and *Agrobacterium* system. This method consistently produced multiple plants through proliferation of clones obtained from different transgene integration events. We obtained hundreds of transgenic fertile plants of soybean IAS5 cultivar. Transgene insertion into the plant genome was confirmed in all screened samples. Therefore, *Agrobacterium*-mediated gene transfer is now available as a routine method for the genetic transformation of proliferative soybean somatic embryos. Although the tissue culture and transformation procedures are laborious, as demonstrated here, the efficiency and reliability of this method justify efforts.

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Table 1. Transient *gus* expression, embryo histodifferentiation and conversion into plants of soybean embryo clusters submitted to *Agrobacterium*-mediated transformation

Cultivar	Blue foci per cluster (mean±SD) <sup>1</sup>	Histodifferentiation		Conversão	
		Number of clones	Number of embryos	Number of clones	Number of embryos
Bragg	7.3±5.7	48	1225	1	25
IAS5	6.5±2.1	232	4944	105	580

<sup>1</sup>Mean value of two clusters out of twelve per dish.

Figure 1. Soybean transgenic plants with pods, obtained from somatic embryogenic clusters submitted to the integrated bombardment and *Agrobacterium*-mediated transformation system. Plants were recovered from two independent genotypes, Bragg (a) and IAS5 (b).

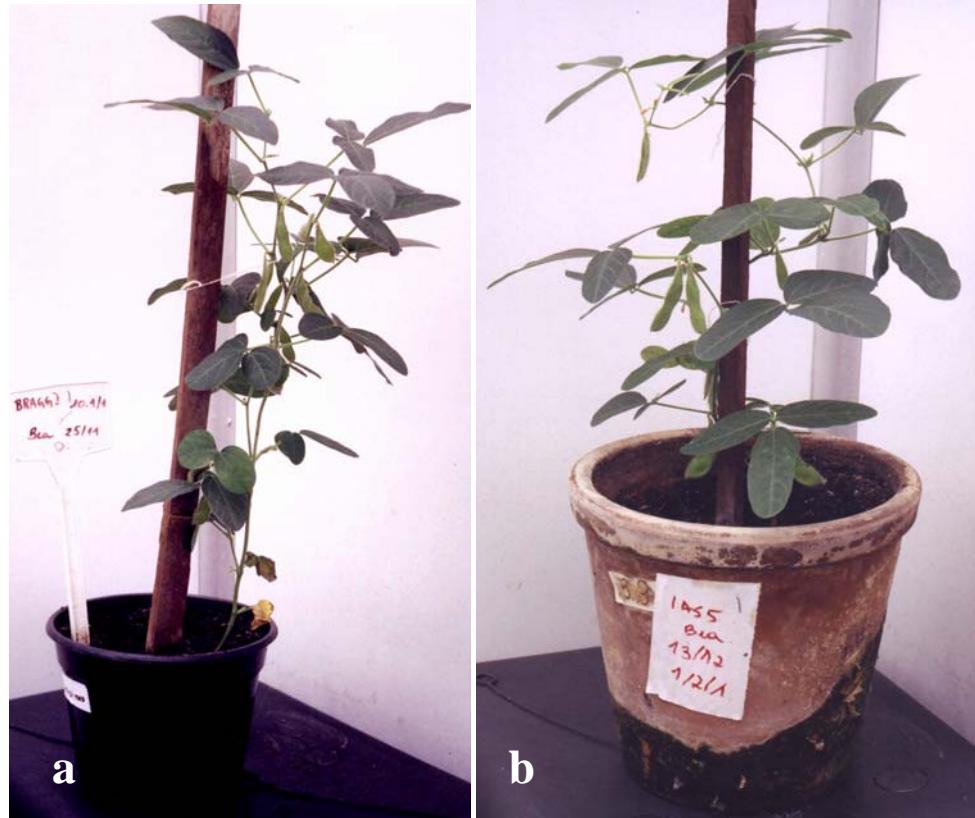
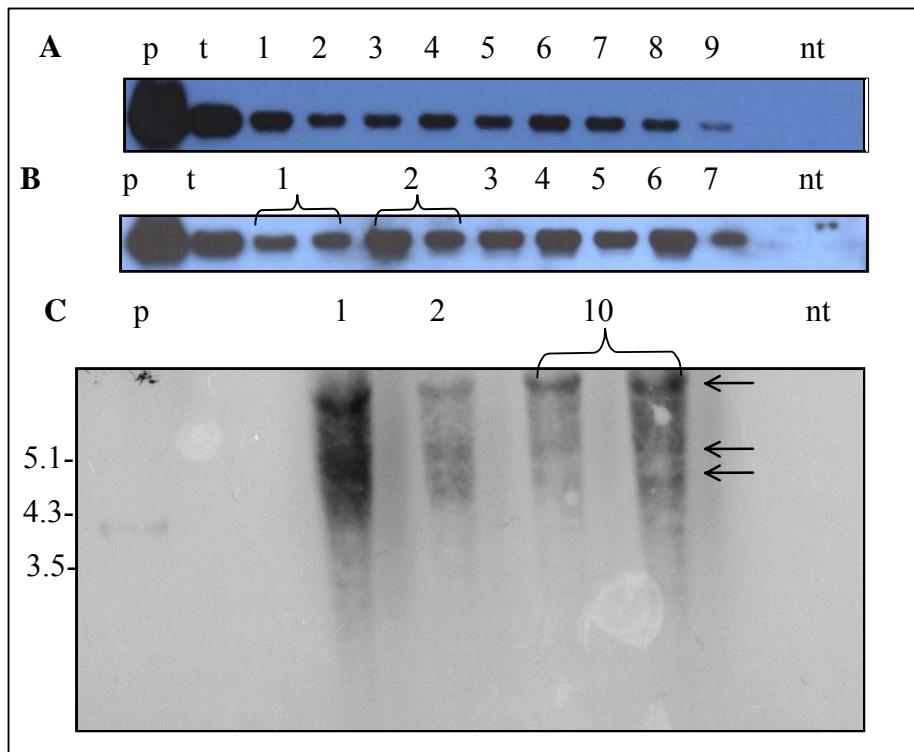


Figure 2. Detection of *hpt* gene in *Agrobacterium*-mediated transformed soybean. (A) Southern hybridization of the PCR product of pGusHyg (p), a known-transgenic plant (t), Bragg histodifferentiated embryos from nine independent events (1-9) and a soybean untransformed plant (nt). (B) Southern hybridization of the PCR product of pGusHyg (p), a known-transgenic plant (t), IAS5 plants from seven independent events (1-7) and a soybean untransformed plant (nt). Events 1 and 2 are represented by two different plants. (C) Southern hybridization analysis of total genomic DNA digested with *Hind*III. Sizes of marker fragments are indicated in kb. Pattern of *hpt*-probe hybridization to pGusHyg (p), digested DNA from IAS5 plants representing two independent transformation events (1 and 2), Bragg plants from a unique event (10) and an untransformed plant (nt). Arrows show the three different hybridization bands, which might reflect the number of gene copies.



## **Capítulo IV**

### **DISCUSSÃO GERAL**

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## **DISCUSSÃO GERAL**

A introdução de genes de interesse em cultivares de soja recomendadas para plantio no Brasil é o objetivo central dos trabalhos realizados por nossa equipe. Atenção especial tem sido dada à transformação genética mediada por *Agrobacterium*, já que esta técnica permite a inserção de um menor número de cópias do transgene no genoma vegetal (Kohli, et al. 2003). Como descrito na introdução, uma estratégia bastante promissora, a transformação de embriões somáticos utilizando o bombardeamento e o sistema *Agrobacterium* de maneira integrada, foi proposta por Droste et al. (2000). Como, em trabalhos anteriores, a obtenção de transformantes estáveis não foi possível, esforços têm sido direcionados para a otimização deste protocolo. O foco de estudo do presente trabalho foi o tratamento com antibióticos necessário para eliminação da bactéria após a transferência dos genes.

Apesar da influência de antibióticos sobre o tecido vegetal em cultura *in vitro* ter sido investigada em diversas espécies, não há registros na literatura de estudos realizados com soja ou mesmo com outras leguminosas. Como apresentado nos Quadros 1 e 2 (Capítulo I), o efeito dos antibióticos varia enormemente conforme a espécie, tipo de explante e sistema de cultura, o que dificulta o estabelecimento de comparações. Desta forma, o ponto de partida do presente trabalho foi avaliar o efeito de diferentes antibióticos sobre os embriões somáticos de soja.

O tratamento com carbenicilina (500 mg/l) apresentou os resultados mais satisfatórios ao longo de todo o período de estudo. Os efeitos deste antibiótico diferiram para as duas cultivares testadas. Enquanto os tecidos embriogênicos da cv. IAS5 não

apresentaram diferenças significativas em relação ao controle, a proliferação dos embriões somáticos da cv. Bragg foi três vezes maior com a adição deste antibiótico ao meio de cultura. Um estímulo semelhante foi descrito para cultivares de *Dianthus* tratadas com a mesma concentração da droga (Nakano & Mii, 1993). Holford & Newbury (1992) propuseram que a ação reguladora de crescimento da carbenicilina é o resultado da sua degradação, que dá origem a uma auxina, o ácido fenilacético. Como altas concentrações de auxina são necessárias para estimular a indução e a proliferação dos embriões somáticos de soja (Ranch et al., 1985), a presença de dois compostos com a mesma função reguladora, auxina 2,4-D e produto da degradação da carbenicilina, explicaria nossas observações.

Entretanto, a carbenicilina apresenta efeitos indesejáveis sobre a embriogênese somática da maioria das espécies estudadas (Quadro 1). Lin et al. (1995) argumentaram que o modo de ação do antibiótico sobre os tecidos vegetais deve ser muito mais complexo do que sua simples degradação, uma vez que existem diversos fatores atuando sobre os produtos dessa degradação. A identificação das condições químicas, físicas e biológicas envolvidas na atividade da carbenicilina sobre os tecidos vegetais em cultura, futuramente permitirá uma compreensão mais precisa dessas observações.

Por sua vez, a cefotaxima, independentemente da concentração, causou necrose em extensões consideráveis dos tecidos embriogênicos de soja, já aos 63 dias de tratamento. Logo, o motivo pelo qual Droste et al. (2000) não obtiveram transformantes estáveis em seus experimentos foi, provavelmente, o tratamento com antibiótico, uma vez que 350 mg/l de cefotaxima foram utilizadas por 90 dias.

O efeito deste antibiótico sobre o tecido vegetal de outras espécies parece variar muito de acordo com a concentração utilizada (Hammerschlag et al., 1997; Bhau & Wakhlu, 2001; Yu et al., 2001; Mayolo et al., 2003 - Quadro 2). A estrutura química da cefotaxima não parece apresentar um produto de degradação com suposta atividade sobre o tecido vegetal, como observado para carbenicilina (Holford & Newbury, 1992). Entretanto, um possível mecanismo de atuação é a geração de metabólitos com atividade reguladora de crescimento como resultado da interação de enzimas vegetais e antibiótico (Sarma et al., 1995; Mathias & Boyd, 1986).

O tratamento com cefotaxima + vancomicina não apresentou efeitos negativos sobre os embriões somáticos de soja até os 63 dias de tratamento. No entanto, altas taxas de mortalidade foram observadas quando o tecido foi exposto, por tempo prolongado, a meios de cultura contendo cefotaxima sozinha ou em combinação com vancomicina. Efeitos semelhantes foram descritos para *Hordeum vulgare* (Mathias & Mukasa, 1987), *Picea sitchensis* (Sarma et al., 1995) e *Triticum aestivum* (Bhau & Wakhlu, 2001). De acordo com Zhang et al. (1999), os produtos da degradação de antibióticos causam, ao longo do tempo, a degradação de polirribossomos, a inibição da síntese protéica e da permeabilidade da membrana.

Uma vez determinado o efeito dos antibióticos sobre o tecido vegetal, a segunda etapa do estudo foi avaliar sua eficiência na supressão da linhagem LBA4404 de *A. tumefaciens* durante a transformação de embriões somáticos de soja.

A carbenicilina, em qualquer uma das concentrações testadas, não foi capaz de suprimir a bactéria, o que inviabiliza sua utilização para este fim. A ineficiência desse antibiótico provavelmente se deve a sua sensibilidade à ação de  $\beta$ -lactamases produzidas pela *Agrobacterium* (Tang et al., 2000) e à acidez do meio de cultura da soja (Pollock et al., 1983).

Por outro lado, a cefotaxima, que apresenta maior resistência às  $\beta$ -lactamases bacterianas, supriu efetivamente a bactéria após 49 dias de tratamento. Este antibiótico já havia sido descrito anteriormente como o mais eficiente contra a linhagem LBA4404 de *A. tumefaciens* presente em explantes de *Nicotiana tabacum* (Shackelford & Chlan, 1996) e *Fragaria vesca* (Alsheikh et al., 2002).

Da mesma forma, a combinação de cefotaxima + vancomicina foi eficiente na supressão desta bactéria após o mesmo período de tratamento. Embora a vancomicina apresente ação bactericida apenas contra bactérias Gram-positivas, ela pode potencializar a atividade da cefotaxima que age contra bactérias Gram-negativas, como *Agrobacterium*. Nestes casos, a cefotaxima rompe a membrana externa das bactérias disponibilizando as células lesadas para atividade da vancomicina (Burgos & Alburquerque, 2003).

Embora os tratamentos com cefotaxima sozinha ou combinada com vancomicina não tenham apresentado diferenças marcantes quanto à supressão de *Agrobacterium*, o

efeito da associação de antibióticos sobre os embriões somáticos de soja foi menos agressivo até os 63 dias de tratamento. Provavelmente, a adição de vancomicina permitiu a utilização de concentrações menores de cefotaxima e, desta forma, minimizou seus efeitos tóxicos a curto e médio prazo. Portanto, o tratamento de cefotaxima + vancomicina por um período de 49 a 63 dias foi considerado o mais adequado para a transformação de embriões somáticos de soja.

Por fim, um experimento de transformação foi realizado para a confirmação de que o tratamento indicado não afeta a viabilidade das células estavelmente transformadas, permitindo a obtenção de plantas a partir das mesmas. Inúmeros eventos independentes de transformação foram obtidos para as duas cultivares testadas. A capacidade de proliferação dos embriões somáticos secundários foi explorada, permitindo o estabelecimento de um número expressivo de clones independentes. A partir destes tecidos, centenas de plantas transgênicas, férteis e morfologicamente normais foram regeneradas.

A taxa de conversão de embriões em plantas diferiu bastante entre as cultivares testadas: 2 e 12 % para Bragg e IAS5, respectivamente. A freqüência de conversão é, normalmente, muito variável entre cultivares de soja (Meurer et al., 2001; Donaldson & Simmonds, 2000; Droste et al., 2001) e a cv. IAS5 é conhecida por apresentar maior capacidade de conversão que a cv. Bragg (Santos et al., 1997; Droste et al., 2002; Körbes & Droste, 2005). Embora as taxas de conversão obtidas no presente trabalho pareçam, a primeira vista, muito baixas, valores semelhantes foram obtidos em trabalhos prévios.

Avanços em todas as etapas da embriogênese somática de soja – indução, proliferação, histodiferenciação e conversão - já foram descritos (Wright et al., 1991; Santarém et al., 1997; Körbes & Droste, 2005), mas o sistema ainda é pouco eficiente se comparado com a regeneração *in vitro* de outras espécies. Uma das etapas mais críticas da cultura de soja é, justamente, a conversão dos embriões em plantas. Segundo Merkle et al. (1995) a falta de vigor em plantas derivadas de embriões somáticos pode estar relacionada com a ausência de quantidade suficiente de reserva nutricional no embrião. Na embriogênese zigótica, as etapas de histodiferenciação e conversão são intercaladas por uma outra fase, a maturação. Neste período de desenvolvimento do embrião ocorre a expansão celular e a deposição de substâncias de reserva. O acúmulo dessas substâncias é uma etapa chave da embriogênese, já que provêm os compostos necessários para o embrião

até o desenvolvimento da autotrofia (Bewley & Black, 1985). Portanto, a modificação das condições de cultura, para prolongar e otimizar a maturação dos embriões somáticos de soja, poderia aumentar as taxas de conversão e o vigor das plantas obtidas (Merkle et al., 1995).

Outro fator que pode interferir no número de plantas regeneradas é o tempo prolongado das culturas embriogênicas utilizadas como alvo para a transferência de genes. Por isso, o estabelecimento e a transformação de culturas jovens (<1 ano, considerando todo o processo) são de fundamental importância (Trick et al., 1997). Desta forma, a transformação de tecidos embriogênicos mantidos em cultura por menor período que os utilizados no presente trabalho (11 meses) pode aumentar a taxa de regeneração de plantas.

Análises moleculares confirmaram a inserção do transgene no genoma vegetal de todas as amostras analisadas, o que atesta a eficiência do nosso processo de transformação e de seleção.

Curiosamente, todas as plantas analisadas apresentavam a inserção de, pelo menos, três cópias do transgene. O número de cópias identificadas está de acordo com o esperado (1-6) para transformação mediada por *Agrobacterium* (Hiei et al., 1994; Cheng et al., 1997). Embora a presença de múltiplas cópias não seja rara quando se utiliza este sistema de transformação, a freqüência com que o transgene aparece no genoma vegetal é, normalmente, menor que quando se utiliza o bombardeamento de partículas (Kohli et al., 2003). Em nosso laboratório, a maioria das plantas obtidas através da transformação de embriões somáticos de soja por bombardeamento apresenta um grande número de cópias (10-20), enquanto poucas plantas contêm uma ou poucas cópias (M. Homrich, comunicação pessoal).

Surpreendentemente, o padrão de inserção do transgene foi similar para todas as plantas analisadas, inclusive para cultivares diferentes. Esse resultado sugere a existência de sítios preferenciais para inserção do T-DNA da linhagem utilizada de *Agrobacterium* no genoma da soja. Matsumoto et al. (1991) sugeriram que locais do genoma vegetal apresentando homologia com a seqüência das bordas do T-DNA seriam sítios preferenciais de integração do transgene. Contudo, conclusões definitivas sobre o número de cópias e o padrão de inserção do transgene requerem a análise de um número maior de exemplares.

Se a tendência observada for confirmada, um estudo detalhado das seqüências de DNA próximas a esses locais seria interessante.

Este é o primeiro registro de obtenção de plantas de soja estavelmente transformadas utilizando o bombardeamento e o sistema *Agrobacterium* de maneira integrada. A adequação do tratamento com antibióticos durante a transformação de embriões somáticos de soja, não só permitiu a obtenção de transformantes estáveis, como também a otimização do método para introdução de genes nessa espécie vegetal. A partir do presente trabalho, esse sistema de transformação está disponível para experimentos que visem a inserção de genes de interesse na soja.

**REFERÊNCIAS BIBLIOGRÁFICAS  
DOS CAPÍTULOS I E IV**

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## **REFERÊNCIAS BIBLIOGRÁFICAS DOS CAPÍTULOS I E IV**

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